



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE SETS EARLY HUNTING SEASON FRAMEWORKS FOR CERTAIN MIGRATORY BIRDS

Final regulations setting the 1982-83 hunting frameworks for certain migratory birds have been announced by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The final rules, published in the August 9, 1982, Federal Register, set the outer limits for dates and times when hunting may begin and end. They also designate hunting areas and set bag and possession limits during the early hunting seasons that open before October 1. State wildlife officials select season dates and daily bag and possession limits from within these frameworks.

The early season regulations cover mourning doves, white-winged doves, band-tailed pigeons, rails, woodcock, common snipe, gallinules, sandhill cranes, ducks, and Canada geese in various parts of the country which may be hunted in September. Teal, for instance, may be hunted in portions of the Mississippi and Central Flyways; sea ducks on designated areas of the Atlantic Flyway; all ducks in Florida, Iowa, Kentucky, and Tennessee; sandhill cranes in the Central Flyway and Arizona, and sandhill cranes and Canada geese in southwestern Wyoming. Also included are falconry seasons in certain states which have met Federal standards.

Changes finalized for this group of birds include a basic nationwide mourning dove season framework of 70 days with 12 birds daily and 24 in possession, with an option for a 45-day season with limits of 15 and 30, respectively. In south Texas, a 4-day white-winged dove season is offered. In Florida, 4 white-winged doves may be taken during the mourning dove season as part of the regular bag limit. A breeding white-winged dove population has developed in Florida from birds which escaped from a propagator several year ago.

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The annual singing-ground survey of breeding woodcock indicated a 20 percent decline from 1981 in the Eastern Region. Blame has been placed on a severe April blizzard and lingering snow cover which is believed to have killed many breeding birds. Thus, a delay until October 5 is provided for opening the woodcock season in Atlantic Flyway States.

Numerous changes have been made in the sandhill crane frameworks for portions of the Central Flyway in terms of hunting areas, season frameworks, and season lengths. These extensions are based on increased crane numbers and improved information about crane biology, migration, and habitat use. The seasons implement some of the strategies of the Mid-Continent Sandhill Crane Management Plan.

Two experimental seasons are provided for sandhill cranes in southwestern New Mexico, and sandhill cranes and Canada geese in portions of Lincoln County, Wyoming. The latter is to reduce local populations and alleviate crop depredations.

Additional information on the Federal early hunting season frameworks is available for the Service's Office of Migratory Bird Management in Washington, D.C. (202/254-3207) and the agency's regional offices. Because States may choose to make their own regulations more strict than the limits prescribed in the Federal frameworks, hunters are advised to check their State regulations carefully.

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